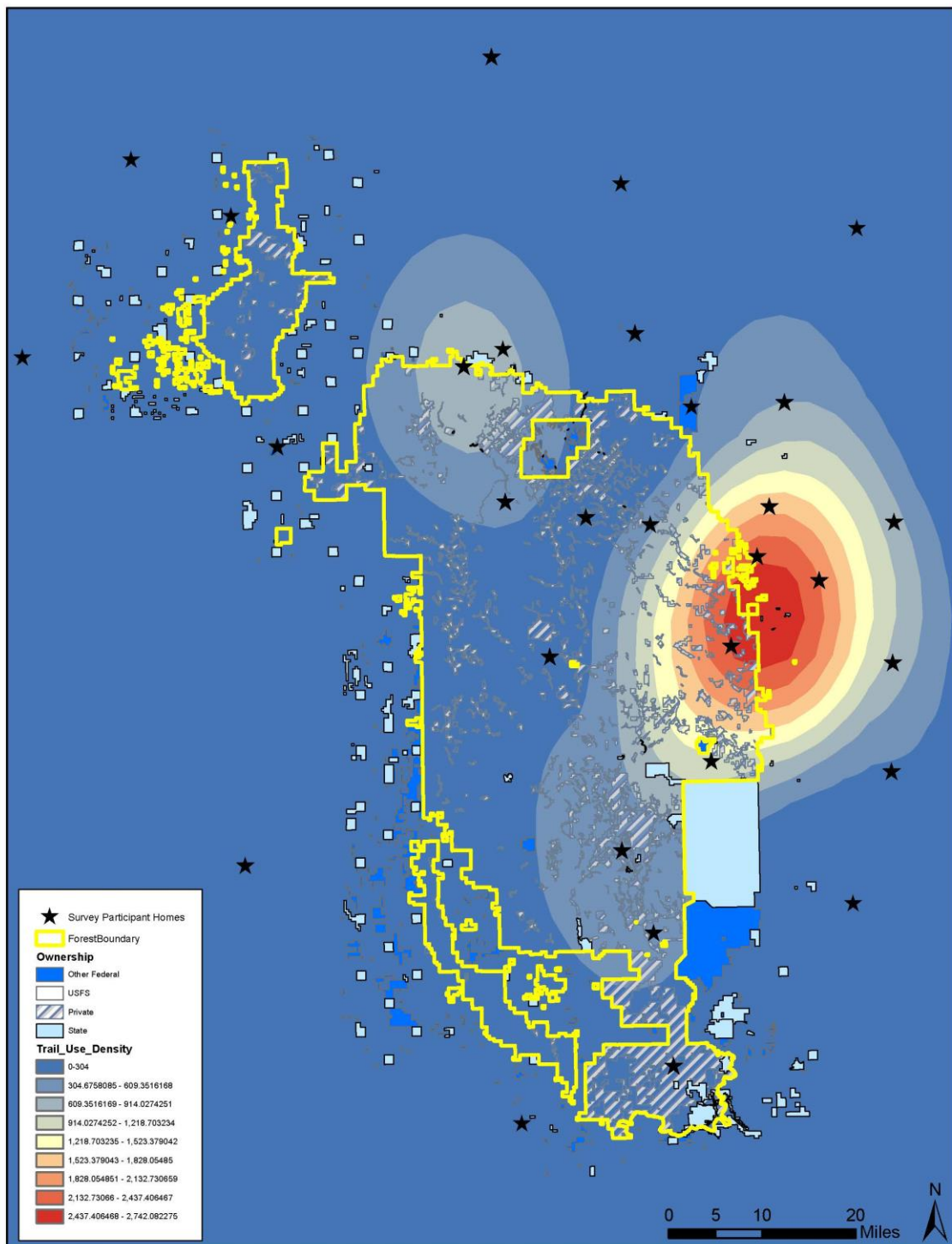


NFAB Opinion Poll Respondent's Location Based on Zip Code



## SUMMER ACTIVITY

### Trail Running



#### Describing the Experience of Trail Running:

**Public Opinion Poll Response Time:** Respondents spent between 3 minutes, 51 seconds to over 11 hours on the public opinion poll. It took 66% of respondents less than 30 minutes to take the public opinion poll. 86% of those that preferred trail running responded to the poll within the first 5 days.

**There were 68 public opinion poll participants (6% of the total that responded) indicated that trail running is their preferred non-motorized trail based activity in the Black Hills.**

The 116 poll participants indicated that trail running is their second preferred non-motorized trail use, 215 participate occasionally, and 345 do not run at all. So, of the 1101 total public opinion polls taken 37% said they at least Run Occasionally.

Those that listed Trail running as their preferred activity...34 said Hike/Walk was their second preferred, 13 said Mt Bike was their second preferred, 1 said Horseback and 1 said other.

Responses represented a wide variety of states, including as far away as Maine and Florida. Those who Preferred Trail running represented South Dakota 87%, while 6% responded from Wyoming and 6% from other states.

South Dakota			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Rapid City	33	Deadwood	1
Spearfish	7	Hermosa	1
Sturgis	3	Hill City	1
Custer	3	Hot Springs	1
Sioux Falls	1+1	Kyle	1
Belle Fourche	1	Piedmont	1
Black Hawk	1	Wall	1
Box Elder	1		





Wyoming			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Gillette	1	Sundance	1
Moorcroft	1		

Other States/Countries			
State	Responses	Country	Responses
Nebraska	1	Elkenroth, Germany*	1
Wisconsin	1		

\* (suspect that postal code was a typo, possibly meant to be Sturgis?)

### Days per Month Trail Running:

15) How many days a month do you participate in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 2		1.89	1
3 - 5		15.09	8
6 - 12		28.30	15
12+		54.72	29
Answered Question			53






### Hours per Outing Trail Running:

16) How many hours do you spend in a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 1		15.09	8
2 - 4		77.36	41
5 - 8		5.66	3
8+		1.89	1
Answered Question			53

### Miles Travelled on Typical Outing:

17) How many miles do you travel on a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 5		16.98	9
6 - 10		33.96	18
11 - 15		33.96	18
16 - 20		11.32	6
20+		3.77	2
Answered Question			53

## Trail Type Preferences:

18) Which of the trail types do you prefer? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Linear	2	12	25	1	40	22%
Point of Interest/Destination	4	18	18	0	40	22%
Loop	33	8	4	1	46	25%
Cross Country	9	6	20	1	36	20%
No Preference	6	0	3	4	13	7%
Other	1	0	1	5	7	4%







## Trail Features Enjoyed:

19) What factors do you enjoy as part of your trail based experience? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Length In Time or Miles	18	12	14	0	44	15%
Trail Type (i.e. linear, destination, etc.)	6	7	22	1	36	13%
Degree Of Challenge	3	8	23	0	34	12%
Proximity To Community	9	5	19	4	37	13%
Degree Of Solitude	9	8	21	2	40	14%
Overall Experience As Measured By Natural Features (i.e. waterfalls, overlooks, etc.)	16	9	16	2	43	15%
Overall Experience As Measured By Trail Features (i.e. rocky, steep, flat, etc.)	14	13	14	0	41	14%
No Preference	1	0	1	5	7	2%
Other	0	0	1	4	5	2%

## Trail Compatibility with Other Users:

20) In your opinion, is your trail based activity compatible with any of the following? Please select all that you feel are compatible.

		Response (%)	Responses
Hike		15.09	8
Walk		1.89	1
Run		41.51	22
Mountain Bike		22.64	12
Horse Back		7.55	4
Motorcycles		0.00	0
ATV/UTV		0.00	0
Other		11.32	6
Answered Question			53

## How easy is it for you to find trails?



Very Easy	Easy	Neutral	Difficult	Very Difficult
10	34	15	9	1

The 23 respondents provided comments... It really depends on the trail. Some are easy to follow because they are well worn, and there is adequate signage, while other trails seriously lack any and/or well-maintained signage. Calling the ranger station before I was out alerted me that several of the trails on the map have been closed for several years. Some of the trails that exist are not well marked, if you lose the marker because of tree being down and so lose the trail, you might run into another trail but it does not tell you which trail you are on, good example Eagle Cliffs. It does not tell you on each marker which trail you are on, so if you run across a trail while lost, you stay lost. Locating and following trails depends on the area.

## Do you belong to a club/organization related to your preferred activity?

The 41 respondents belonged to a club related to their preferred activity, while 19 did not.

## Does your club/organization participate in trail based volunteer projects?

The 38 said their club volunteers, while 3 did not, 3 didn't know and 15 was not applicable.

## Have you or would you consider volunteering in trail based projects?

The 47 said they would, while 1 said no and 12 would consider volunteering.

## Is the Black Hills area meeting your non-motorized trail based expectations?

The 52.83% that said they Strongly Agree (8) or Agree (18), 13 of which provided comments to say that the Black Hills area trails are meeting their expectations. Their reasons for that...They enjoy the variety and availability, never get bored, access or closeness to trailheads is great. The trails are wonderful, the possibilities of closures or fines to enjoy them is disheartening. I am struggling to understand why some races were not given permits this year. Good start but need more. I would like to see perhaps more off shoots of these trails to add some variety or offer opportunity for loops from trailheads instead of out and backs. Overall I don't know what is approved or not, but I do love having the variety of places and terrain types to enjoy and mix up the experience.

The 33.96% that said they Strongly Disagree (8) or Disagree (6). All provided comments to say that the Black Hills area trails are not meeting their expectations. Respondents commented that...Not enough trails, lack of maintenance on established trails, user conflict on Trail 89, complained about race events being canceled.

Non-motorized trail use and creation has negligible impact on the environment and maximum benefit to the accessibility of the hills. Non-motorized trail use and creation has negligible impact on the environment and maximum benefit to the accessibility of the hills. What's the point of a public forest if it cannot be accessed by the public? There may be a point at which there needs to be non-motorized trail regulation, but usage would have to increase at least 10 fold. Trail creation and use needs to be embraced and expanded not restricted. "The Black Hills Area" is fantastic, accessible area made for trails.

Of the 15% that responded with Neutral (6), comments were provided by 4 of the...The trails we have are good, but as many are "unofficial," they need to become official, and need upgraded signage. One complained about user conflict with the motorized users but also wanted access to the Snowmobile trails for Fat Tire riding.

**Is there anything you would like to elaborate on or add that may not have been included?**

The 13 who provided comments generally elaborated that...It's laziness to stand behind the excuse of "we can't maintain trails" when you don't anyway. Organized runs are some of the best activities on the trails.

**What is your favorite trail in the Black Hills area and why?**

The 41 who provided comments generally shared that...Victoria Gulch trails - diversity, type of trail/surface, views. I like Buzzard's Roost because it's the most "bang for your buck"--hard, good view, close to town, and a good length. Too many to name! My favorite trail in the Black Hills area is the Skyline Wilderness trail system. It does not get as much traffic as HLMP, has better views than HLMP, but does not get as much foot traffic. Centennial trail. Diverse features and length/proximity.

**SUMMER ACTIVITY**  
**Trail Hiking/Walking**



**Describing the Experience of Trail Hiking/Walking:**

**Public Opinion Poll Response Time:** Respondents spent between 3 minutes, 15 seconds to over 23 hours on the public opinion poll. It took 68% of respondents less than 30 minutes to take the poll. The 66% of those that preferred trail hiking/walking responded to the public opinion poll within the first 5 days.

There were 389 public opinion poll participants (35% of the total that responded) indicated that trail hiking/walking is their preferred non-motorized trail-based activity in the Black Hills.

The 431 poll participants indicated that trail hiking/walking is their second preferred non-motorized trail use,







114 participate occasionally, and 169 do not trail hike/walk at all. So, of the 1101 total public opinion polls taken 85% hike/walk at least occasionally.

Responses represented a wide variety of states, including as far away as Florida. Those who Preferred Trail hiking/walking represented South Dakota and Wyoming (~91%), while ~6% responded from other states.

Location	Responses	Location	Responses
South Dakota (West River)	337	Adjacent States	12
South Dakota (East River)	17	Non-Adjacent States	16

### Days per Month Trail Hiking/Walking:

7) How many days a month do you participate in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 2		11.08	39
3 - 5		31.82	112
6 - 12		32.95	116
12+		24.15	85
Answered Question			352






### Hours per Outing Trail Hiking/Walking:

8) How many hours do you spend in a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 1		4.26	15
2 - 4		69.03	243
4 - 8		23.30	82
8+		3.41	12
Answered Question			352

### Miles Travelled on Typical Outing:

9) How many miles do you travel on a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 5		45.48	161
6 - 10		42.66	151
11 - 15		4.52	16
16 - 20		3.11	11
20+		4.24	15
Answered Question			354

## Trail Type Preferences:

10) Which of the trail types do you prefer? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It	Responses	Total
Linear	17	40	166	27	250	20%
Point of Interest/Destination	121	121	74	1	317	25%
Loop	168	95	48	3	314	25%
Cross Country	38	47	137	28	250	20%
No Preference	29	11	26	30	96	8%
Other	7	2	9	27	45	4%

## Trail Features Enjoyed:

11) What factors do you enjoy as part of your trail based experience? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Length In Time or Miles	34	56	127	9	226	12%
Trail Type (i.e. linear, destination, etc.)	40	44	128	13	225	12%
Degree Of Challenge	15	39	143	27	224	12%
Proximity To Community	13	37	100	58	208	11%
Degree Of Solitude	118	74	90	11	293	16%
Overall Experience As Measured By Natural Features (i.e. waterfalls, overlooks, etc.)	181	78	51	2	312	17%
Overall Experience As Measured By Trail Features (i.e. rocky, steep, flat, etc)	34	68	143	10	255	14%
No Preference	7	2	14	31	54	3%
Other	6	0	11	18	35	2%

## Trail Compatibility with Other Users:

12) In your opinion, is your trail based activity compatible with any of the following? Please select all that you feel are compatible.

		Response (%)	Responses
Hike		25.63	336
Walk		24.03	315
Run		18.84	247
Mountain Bike		15.41	202
<hr/>			
Horse Back		10.22	134
Motorcycles		1.98	26
ATV/UTV		2.52	33
Other		1.37	18
Answered Question			348



### **Is the Black Hills area meeting your non-motorized trail based expectations?**

The 60% that Strongly Agree (80) or Agree (152) say that the Black Hills area trails are meeting their expectations.

The comments from people who strongly agreed were quite positive. Most mentioned factors such as quality and variety of trails as reasons for their satisfaction even when they had to share trails with other user groups. Meanwhile, comments from respondents in the Agree category, while still quite positive, shared that the trails had too much usage, more trails were needed, and more maintenance was necessary. Both Strongly Agree and Agree respondents were sympathetic to the demands on the Forest Service. They seemed to understand the challenge in dealing with diverse user groups, fires, pine beetles and like issues. These respondents generally believed that a good job was being done by the Forest Service. While user conflict was mentioned, they were more accepting of it.

#### **Representative Comments From This Group:**

“There is something for everyone! Close, far, difficult, easy, scenic, dog-friendly, etc.”

“So many trails so little time. Enjoy the fact we can explore a different place each time we hike.”

The 15% that Strongly Disagree (17) or Disagree (42) say that the Black Hills area trails are not meeting their expectations.

Respondents in this group commented that user conflict was a big issue. Many stated that they don’t like motorized users on their trails. They felt that the Forest Service was giving motorized trails a higher priority than non-motorized. Some stated that motorized users were not being monitored or penalized for breaking the rules or being on the wrong trails. Others said motorized users were ruining the trail system and creating a lot of noise. They also made statements that the Forest Service was expanding the motorized trail system while decreasing the non-motorized trail system. They also didn’t like having to share their trails with horses and mountain bikers. In this group they also thought more trails were needed close to town for better access while others wanted more solitude away from the noise.

#### **Representative Comment From This Group:**

“Find that atvs are on non motorized trails. Maybe better signage is needed or more gates. Or fines for those atvs that are found on those trails”.

The 11% that responded with Neutral (43) spoke primarily about increasing the number of trails, more trail maintenance and better signage.

### **Is there anything you would like to elaborate on or add that may not have been included?**

Respondents generally elaborated on issues such as trail maintenance, creating new trails, having backcountry availability to dispersed camping, better maps, and user conflict. Many of these comments were restated from previous comments made in other sections. Other suggestions included more bathrooms and increase signage.

### **What is your favorite trail in the Black Hills area and why?**

Virtually all respondents listed a favorite trail. In fact, it was common for respondents to list three or four or more favorite trails. A wide variety of trails were named throughout the Black Hills.

## SUMMER ACTIVITY

### Mountain Biking



#### Describing the Experience of Mountain Biking in the Black Hills:

**Public Opinion Poll Response Time:** Mountain biking respondents spent between 3 minutes and 24 hours on the public opinion poll. It took the majority of respondents less than 25 minutes. Seventy-two percent of those preferring mountain biking responded within the first 5 days of the public opinion poll.

**The 325 public opinion poll participants (29% of the total responses to the public opinion poll) indicated that mountain biking is their preferred non-motorized summer trail based activity in the Black Hills.**

The 147 public opinion poll participants indicated that mountain biking is their second preferred non-motorized trail use, 137 participate occasionally, and 243 do not mountain bike at all. **Of the 1101 total public opinion polls taken 55% mountain bike *at least occasionally*.**

Of those indicating mountain biking as their preferred activity, 238 shared they enjoyed hike/walk as their second preferred, followed by 51 who listed running, and 3 for horseback riding as their second preferred activity.





Responses came from a wide variety of states as far away as Wisconsin and California. Most were from South Dakota and Wyoming (96%), while <4% responded from other states:

South Dakota (West River)			
Region		Responses	
Northern Hills		76	
Rochford (2), Lead-Deadwood (4), Spearfish (39), Belle Fourche (1), Whitewood (1), Sturgis (29)			
Central Hills		186	
Rapid City (181), Piedmont (2), Black Hawk (2), Box Elder (1)			
Southern Hills		18	
Custer (12), Hermosa (4), Hot Springs (2)			
Bison	1	Allen	1

Region	Responses
<b>Wyoming</b>	
Sundance	5
Other Cities in Wyoming	8
<b>South Dakota (East River)</b>	
Sioux Falls, Pierre, Mitchell, Huron, and Brookings	18
<b>Midwest Area</b>	
North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota	4
<b>West and West Coast</b>	
California, Nevada, and Utah	4
<b>Rocky Mountains</b>	
Montana and Colorado	3

### Days per Month Mountain Biking:

23) How many days a month do you participate in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 2		1.45	4
3 - 5		13.45	37
6 - 12		30.55	84
12+		54.55	150
Answered Question			275

### Hours per Outing Mountain Biking:

24) How many hours do you spend in a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 1		4.69	13
2 - 4		87.00	241
5 - 8		7.22	20
8+		1.08	3
Answered Question			277

### Miles Travelled on Typical Outing:

25) How many miles do you travel on a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 5		5.45	15
6 - 10		25.45	70
11 - 15		37.82	104
16 - 20		16.73	46
20+		14.55	40
Answered Question			275

## Trail Type Preferences:

26) Which of the trail types do you prefer? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It	Responses	Total
Linear	9	46	108	16	179	19%
Point of Interest/Destination	19	77	105	4	205	22%
Loop	207	39	13	1	260	28%
Cross Country	47	84	75	5	211	22%
No Preference	18	6	15	14	53	6%
Other	8	4	6	13	31	3%

## Trail Features Enjoyed:

27) What factors do you enjoy as part of your trail based experience? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Length In Time or Miles	40	47	106	6	199	14%
Trail Type (i.e. linear, destination, etc.)	40	43	101	6	190	13%
Degree Of Challenge	64	37	89	3	193	14%
Proximity To Community	46	40	86	13	185	13%
Degree Of Solitude	34	35	117	3	189	13%
Overall Experience As Measured By Natural Features (i.e. waterfalls, overlooks, etc.)	51	43	108	0	202	14%
Overall Experience As Measured By Trail Features (i.e. rocky, steep, flat, etc.)	99	56	55	0	210	15%
No Preference	2	0	3	25	30	2%
Other	3	2	2	15	22	2%

## Trail Compatibility with Other Users:

28) In your opinion, is your trail based activity compatible with any of the following? Please select all that you feel are compatible.

		Response (%)	Responses
Hike		23.28	257
Walk		20.92	231
Run		20.38	225
Mountain Bike		23.82	263
Horse Back		7.70	85
Motorcycles		2.17	24
ATV/UTV		1.27	14
Other		0.45	5
Answered Question			277

## Is the Black Hills area meeting your non-motorized trail based expectations?

The 28% that Strongly Agree or Agree say that there are currently adequate trails of quality for them to ride on. Overall, they like the variety and find the maintenance good. For this being explanations of why their needs are being met, there were a surprising number of more negative remarks... some cite conflicts with horses and dirt bikes and ATVs. Some mention awareness of conflicts between illegal trail-builders and the Forest Service. Many expressed wanting more trails and better maintenance.

The 55% that Disagree Strongly and Disagree say that there are currently not enough trails especially near the

urban interface, and that the existing trails are too remote, not long enough, poorly maintained, and an inconvenient configuration of point to point. Some said that an unfair proportion of trails are designated for motorized travel, with little left for mountain biking trails.

Mountain Bikers want stacked loop trails especially with trailheads near Rapid City that have parking and signage. Many see untapped opportunities for eco/biking tourism.

Many view relations with the Forest Service as adversarial and want less 'regulation', but others have noted room for improvement and working together. Many have expressed a willingness to volunteer.

The 17% that responded with Neutral spoke about untapped potential from mountain biking trails in the Black Hills. They too would like to see more trails designated, particularly looped, single tracks. They think that actively working towards a broader knowledge of trail etiquette, good trail design and maintenance would greatly improve relationships between users and the Forest Service. They believe there is a wealth of volunteers waiting to be harnessed, and that economic/ community benefits are waiting if we can just get off on the right foot. They want better maps and access. Again, there is much negative awareness of conflicts between groups building trails on the forest and Forest Service personnel. More trails, less congestion.

#### **Is there anything you would like to elaborate on or add that may not have been included?**

Respondents generally elaborated that they care about the trails and are available to volunteer. They feel some government entities (BLM, Sturgis) and BHNH Districts are more helpful than others (N. Hills vs. Mystic). One person said the "rift" was a media construct (i.e. RC Journal) and that positive progress should be reported. One commenter suggested measures be put in place to restrict trail use when it is wet to prevent damage to the trails. Would like more signs, "You are here". Use is rapidly increasing and we need to get ahead of it with more trails and organization – that will curb the illegal stuff. Stacked loops, more! Single track trails, more!

Design matters. Connect to towns. Non-motorized neglected due to focus on motorized. Thankful for the trail resource we have.

Frustration with destruction of forest by motorized users, logging and grazing, and horseback riding. Want violating motorists to be fined – and make better gates to prevent illegal use. FS should crack down on illegal trail building and use. Logging is bad for mountain bikers – look at the damage from timber and grazing – feel like it is a double standard to worry about damage from mountain bikers.

#### **Favorite Comment:**

"Non-motorized trail users have been on the back burner for the last 20 years while the forest service has understandably dealt with bigger issues such as motorized use, pine beetle outbreaks, fuel reduction, etc. in this time non-motorized use has skyrocketed and the result has concluded in many miles of unofficial trails that have become a bedrock to the outdoor community in the region. I hope that we can all work together and get the current legacy trails on the system and find a fair way to balance all users in the forest while protecting the important resource that is our forest. I would love to see the forest service meeting with us and working with the non-motorized community on a compromise we can all be proud of."

## SUMMER ACTIVITY

### Horseback Riding



#### Describing the Experience of Horseback Riding:

**Public Opinion Poll Response Time:** Respondents spent between 3 minutes, 17 seconds to over 23 hours on the public opinion poll. It took 94% of respondents less than 30 minutes to take the public opinion poll. 82% of those that preferred horseback riding responded to the public opinion poll within the first 5 days.

**There were 270 public opinion poll participants (24% of the total that responded) indicated that horseback riding is their preferred non-motorized trail based activity in the Black Hills.**

30 public opinion poll participants indicated that horseback riding is their second preferred non-motorized trail use, 63 participate occasionally, and 471 do not ride horses at all. So, of the 1101 total public opinion polls taken 17% ride horses at least occasionally.

Those that listed Horseback riding as there preferred activity shared that 154 enjoyed hike/walk as their second preferred, followed by “other (atv, fish, hunting),” 3 listed running, and no responses for mountain biking

Responses represented a wide variety of states, including as far away as Maine and Florida. Those who Preferred Horseback riding represented South Dakota and Wyoming (33%), while 77% responded from other states.

South Dakota (West River)			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Rapid City	16	Black Hawk	1
Custer	14	Burke	1
Piedmont	5	Edgemont	1
Sturgis	5	Fairburn	1
Hot Springs	4	Kadoka	1
Hermosa	3	Keystone	1
Hill City	3	New Underwood	1
Spearfish	3	Nisland	1
Whitewood	3	Porcupine	1
Belle Fourche	2	Pringle	1
Box Elder	2	Vale	1
Nemo	2		





South Dakota (East River)			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Agar	1	Hayti	1
Bryant	1	Lake Campbell	1
Elkton	1	Madison	
Hartford	1		
Wyoming			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Gillette	2	Newcastle	1
Alva	1	Sundance	1
Cheyenne	1	Wheatland	1

Midwest Area			
State	Responses	State	Responses
Minnesota	26	Illinois	9
Iowa	22	Michigan	5
Missouri	22	Kansas	4
Wisconsin	17	Ohio	4
Nebraska	12		
Southern States			
Florida	7	West Virginia	3
Kentucky	7	Georgia	1
Tennessee	6	North Carolina	1
Texas	5	Oklahoma	1
Arkansas	4	Virginia	1
West Coast			
California	4	Washington	1
Northeast			
New York	3	Maine	1
Rocky Mountains			
Colorado	6	New Mexico	1
Arizona	2		

### Days per Month Horseback Riding:

31) How many days a month do you participate in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 2		1.67	4
3 - 5		9.17	22
6 - 12		36.67	88
12+		52.50	126
Answered Question			240

## Hours per Outing Horseback Riding:

32) How many hours do you spend in a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 1		0.83	2
2 - 4		31.25	75
5 - 8		49.17	118
8+		18.75	45
Answered Question			240

## Miles Travelled on Typical Outing:

33) How many miles do you travel on a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 5		4.20	10
6 - 10		19.33	46
11 - 15		31.93	76
16 - 20		20.17	48
20+		24.37	58
Answered Question			238

## Trail Type Preferences:

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It	Responses	Total
Linear	2	10	74	23	109	15%
Point of Interest/Destination	47	88	44	2	181	25%
Loop	116	51	28	2	197	27%
Cross Country	48	43	52	6	149	21%
No Preference	31	6	18	9	64	9%
Other	3	2	4	9	18	3%

## Trail Features Enjoyed:

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Length in Time or Miles	24	15	76	6	121	12%
Trail Type (i.e. linear, destination, etc.)	25	27	74	7	133	13%
Degree Of Challenge	23	20	73	9	125	12%
Proximity To Community	6	4	35	53	98	9%
Degree Of Solitude	35	40	62	6	143	14%
Overall Experience As Measured By Natural Features (i.e. waterfalls, overlooks, etc.)	138	44	21	1	204	19%
Overall Experience As Measured By Trail Features (i.e. rocky, steep, flat, etc.)	43	74	52	3	172	16%
No Preference	11	2	8	15	36	3%
Other	1	2	3	10	16	2%

## Trail Compatibility with Other Users:

36) In your opinion, is your trail based activity compatible with any of the following? Please select all that you feel are compatible.

		Response (%)	Responses
Hike		23.77	178
Walk		22.30	167
Run		14.02	105
Mountain Bike		8.28	62
Horse Back		27.24	204
Motorcycles		0.80	6
ATV/UTV		2.94	22
Other		0.67	5
Answered Question			239

## Is the Black Hills area meeting your non-motorized trail based expectations?

The 75% that Strongly Agree or Agree say that the Black Hills area trails are meeting their expectations. Their reasons for that generally fell under 4 or 5 themes. Generally, the overall opinion was that the Black Hills area has beautiful trails and scenery. There was no real distinction of jurisdiction, rather than generally loving the experience of the Black Hills. They felt it was beautiful country to ride in and that they enjoyed the quiet and peaceful trails.

Respondents shared a desire for better marked trails, more corrals at camp sites, better parking for truck pull thru with trailers, more horse trailers, and several concerns for the amount of beetle killed trees across the trails and needing maintenance. Respondents also responded about creating a brochure of available horse trails, pull-in access, water locales, and maps of trails.

The 4% that Strongly Disagree or Disagree say that the Black Hills area trails are not meeting their expectations. Respondents commented that user conflicts were making their experience less than desirable. Respondents spoke about the conflicts with ATVs and motorized use on non-motorized trails being disruptive to their experience. In addition, respondents shared somewhat similar concerns with mountain bikes and the concern of building or putting races under permit and then the trails becoming used and defacto trails for year around use. One respondent felt that the reputation of the mountain bikers is that of disrespect for trails and wilderness. They felt their needs to be more law enforcement and signing/education on who yields to whom. There was also a concern shared that it seems that there are more restrictions on the areas that have been traditionally open to use.

The 21% that responded with Neutral spoke about more trails, more loop trails, better parking and pull thru facilities, better trail marking. They shared a concern about too much motorized, enjoyment for the Upper French Creek area, and retaining overland travel.

## Is there anything you would like to elaborate on or add that may not have been included?

Respondents generally elaborated that they appreciated the privilege of riding trails in the Black Hills and the ability that it offered to others that may not use other types of activities yet want to enjoy the Black Hills experience. There was an appreciation for the peaceful, quiet and clear air. Respondents spoke to the concern with encountering motorized trail (needs attention) users as well as mountain bikes. Many enjoyed the Upper French Creek area and remain unhappy about current condition. It was felt that trails should be marked more clearly with accepted uses (Safety is important). Education is important for shared uses. Would love more trails, better maintenance, and trail marking. There was a recognition of the challenge with the

amount of beetle killed trees across the trails. Respondents generally also showed concern for so many trails creating more conflicts and improving so much that the WILD experience is lost. This group is also willing to spend time volunteering on trail building/maintenance.

What is your favorite trail in the Black Hills area and why?

Respondents generally shared that there were too many to pick just one because of the variety and beauty and opportunity to connect with nature. The general consensus was that this user group would like to know more about access at trailheads and maps of forest trails. They appreciated trails that were marked well, good scenery as mentioned before, and camping availability. The list of specifically named trails includes: Alkali Creek, Big Hill, Centennial, Black Elk Wilderness, Box Elder Canyon, Bogus Jim, Cement Ridge, Custer Area, Nemo Area, Custer State Park (French Creek, Mount Rushmore), Deerfield (Slate Creek), Elk Haven, Flume Trail, Lakota Lake Area, Blueberry Trail, Iron Creek, Hay Creek Ranch, Upper French Creek, Fort Mead, Northern Hills Area, Norbeck Area, Layton Canyon, Lovers Leap, Mickelson Trail, Mount Baldy, Reuter Springs Trail, Slate Creek, Southern Hills area, Spearfish Canyon, Sundance area Trail area, Fort Mead.

### SUMMER ACTIVITY “Other”



#### Describing the Experience of “Other”:

**Public Opinion Poll Response Time:** Respondents spent between 7 minutes, 28 seconds to over an hour on the public opinion poll. It took 56% of respondents less than 30 minutes to take the public opinion poll. The 64% of those that preferred “Other” responded to the public opinion poll within the first 5 days.

**There were 25 public opinion poll participants (2% of the total that responded) indicated that “Other” is their *preferred* non-motorized trail based activity in the Black Hills.** For these “Other” represented cross country ski and snowshoe, driving horse and cart, camping, backpacking, ATV, prospecting, gold panning, rock hounding, bird watching trips, shooting/target practice and ham radio, rock climbing, bike touring and gravel grinding.

Those that listed “Other” as their preferred activity also shared that 8 enjoyed hike/walk as their second preferred, followed by 6 for Run, 1 for horseback riding, and no responses for mountain biking





In response to their “Second Preferred,” 28 poll participants indicated that Hike/Walk is their second preferred non-motorized trail use, 37 participate occasionally, and 243 do not participate or is not applicable. Of the 1,101 polls taken 28% participate in some “Other” activity at least occasionally.

Responses represented a variety of states, for the small response group. Those who preferred “Other” represented South Dakota and Wyoming (76%), while 24% responded from other states.

South Dakota			
City	Responses	City	Responses
Rapid City	10	Deadwood	1
Spearfish	3	Hermosa	1
Custer	2	Lead	1
Wyoming			
Buffalo	1		
Other States			
State	Responses	States	Responses
Nebraska	2	Illinois	1
California	1	Iowa	1





### Days per Month “Other”:

39) How many days a month do you participate in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 2		11.76	2
3 - 5		17.65	3
6 - 12		35.29	6
12+		35.29	6
Answered Question			17






### Hours per Outing “Other”:

40) How many hours do you spend in a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 1		5.88	1
2 - 4		29.41	5
5 - 8		41.18	7
8+		23.53	4
Answered Question			17

## Miles Travelled on Typical Outing:

41) How many miles do you travel on a typical outing, when participating in your preferred activity?

		Response (%)	Responses
0 - 5		23.53	4
6 - 10		23.53	4
11 - 15		5.88	1
16 - 20		5.88	1
20+		41.18	7
Answered Question			17

## Trail Type Preferences:

42) Which of the trail types do you prefer? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It	Responses	Total
Linear	0	1	3	2	6	13%
Point of Interest/Destination	3	5	2	0	10	21%
Loop	3	4	2	1	10	21%
Cross Country	3	0	2	2	7	15%
No Preference	3	1	2	2	8	17%
Other	5	0	1	1	7	15%

## Trail Features Enjoyed:

43) What factors do you enjoy as part of your trail based experience? Please select only one in the Preferred and Second Preferred columns.

	Preferred	Second Preferred	Enjoy It	Do Not Particularly Enjoy It or Not Applicable	Responses	Total
Length In Time or Miles	2	0	4	4	10	13%
Trail Type (i.e. linear, destination, etc.)	0	5	2	3	10	13%
Degree Of Challenge	1	2	2	4	9	11%
Proximity To Community	0	0	2	5	7	9%
Degree Of Solitude	5	1	6	0	12	15%
Overall Experience As Measured By Natural Features (i.e. waterfalls, overlooks, etc.)	6	3	2	1	12	15%
Overall Experience As Measured By Trail Features (i.e. rocky, steep, flat, etc.)	1	0	4	3	8	10%
No Preference	0	2	1	3	6	8%
Other	3	0	0	3	6	8%



## Trail Compatibility with Other Users:

44) In your opinion, is your trail based activity compatible with any of the following? Please select all that you feel are compatible.

		Response (%)	Responses
Hike		20.34	12
Walk		15.25	9
Run		10.17	6
Mountain Bike		13.56	8
Horse Back		8.47	5
Motorcycles		6.78	4
ATV/UTV		16.95	10
Other		8.47	5
Answered Question			17

### Is the Black Hills area meeting your non-motorized trail based expectations?

The 16% (4) said they Agree with comments like “When I visit National Forest Trails, they are very nice.” And a more tempered “On the positive side, The Black Hills my favorite places to travel to rock climb, fly-fish, hike and mountain bike. I have been concerned about some access issues I hope the national forest continues to be inviting to mountain bikers.”

The 20% (5) said they Disagree (2) or Strongly Disagree (3). They felt that “although there are ample trails and Forest Service roads that provide access to areas I am interested in; most are closed during times when weather is nice. In warm weather, as early as March and April, roads and trails should be open and allow access. Often a FS road will merely serve as a means to get to an area where I can park and begin hiking. With roads closed, you add miles to a hike that is unnecessary. This is a problem for us disabled and elderly who enjoy our forests. Closures also impact prospecting Clubs, Horseback Riding Clubs, fishermen, hunters, mountain bikers, and so on. Please open the roads earlier in the season.

A similar concern was “Over regulation . . . bordering on downright harassment toward shooters in the forest. Negative attitude toward ham radio use of existing radio sites. Use of FS regulations to alter the common description of a radio site (i.e. building, power lines, phone lines, tower) to whatever the FS desires to call the site to evade or dissuade accommodating ham radio at the FS constructed site.

Seven respondents elaborated and were split evenly between concern for the proliferation of motorized trails and the lack of handicap accessibility.

“Many disruptions to the natural features and ecosystems in the Black Hills greatly devalue the potential for a quality outdoor recreational experience. The misguided and monumental effort to create a “world-class” motorized trail system is at the top of the list of infringements as the hence attracted motorized users routinely go beyond the designated trails -- an everyday occurrence that is exacerbated by all of the ‘routes’ created by recent logging and a lack of law enforcement presence. There is precious little for a nature and solitude seeker to enjoy. The natural environment of the Black Hills is rapidly sliding towards the quality of a vacant lot --

something almost no one will enjoy -- and administrators should act to reverse the trend by reducing motor trails and replacing them with non-motor trails."

"You were destroying the handicaps Community access to the trails in the Black Hills bike constantly closing Trails you were denying children access to the woods I hope you will reconsider these actions"

**What is your favorite trail in the Black Hills area and why?**

The 10 respondents listed 10 different areas or trails, one said "The trails in the Black Hills are all enjoyable -- we just need a FS that understands progression and teach sustainable methods-- time to work together!" And one said "I don't want you to open up my favorite hike(s) to motorized vehicles, so I will not tell you."